

Utah Watershed Review

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Earth Day Reborn: Green Revolution Hits Its Stride

By Jack Wilbur

Hippies, Yuppies, communes, Earth Day, Smokey the Bear, Woodsy Owl, the “Crying Indian,” and Earth Day, are all symbols from the late 1960s or early 70s with a direct or indirect connection to the environment. They are also some of the influences that during a generation or more have slowly brought us to the verge of an eco-revolution tipping point in our society. As springtime and Earth Day 2008 are upon us, it seems appropriate to declare that the ‘greening’ of our country is in full swing.

To what do we owe this “awakening” of the general public? Is it a generation or more of social marketing? Is it what some people call “collective consciousness?” Is it dramatically rising fuel costs? Is it a collection of scientists, media and celebrities proclaiming “global warming” that has everybody and his dog jumping on the green bandwagon? Perhaps it is all of the above.

The eco-revolution, or evolution has been slow in coming, but it has kicked into full gear in the past few years. If you doubt that statement, look around and you are sure to see signs of eco-friendly building, marketing, and living.

Take for example, NBC’s green week of programming in November 2007. All of their prime time shows during that week tried to have a “green” theme or at least passing references to recycling, hybrid vehicles, or other eco-friendly practices. Marketing ploy? Most likely, but they wouldn’t do it if they didn’t think it would be a good marketing ploy. During Earth Week 2008, NBC News advertised that they would be focusing on the environment all week. “Green Week” must have

done well.

Wal-Mart, Home Depot and many major retailers are going green, and not just at this time of year. Many national manufacturers and retailers have realized the market opportunities that exist within the green movement. The Sesame Street Muppet, Kermit the Frog, sang “It’s Not Easy Being Green.” Kermit may have been right, but it’s getting easier all the time.

See “Earth Day”, page 2

War on Cheatgrass Gets \$2 Mill. Legislative Boost

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) working with the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD) secured major reinforcements from the Utah Legislature for the war on cheatgrass. Senate Bill 89, authored by Senator Dennis Stowell (R) Parowan, established the Invasive Species Mitigation Fund and set aside \$2 million to fund range projects that will limit the size of wildfires.

A significant portion of Utah’s rangeland is being invaded by fast growing annual grasses, such as

cheatgrass, that negatively impacts livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Cheatgrass has been blamed for fueling catastrophic fires during the summer of 2007 that contributed to



See “Cheatgrass”, page 3

“Earth Day” Continued from page 1

On a flight earlier this month, I noticed in the Delta Airlines Sky magazine, an advertisement for Greenopia, a guidebook for New Yorkers “to more than 1,000 eco-friendly businesses and resources. A few pages later in the same magazine appeared an ad for “Camp Bow Wow,” a doggy hotel. The ad was celebrating “Happy Earth Dog.”

If that isn't enough there are eco-tourism vacations, concentrated laundry detergent in eco-friendly (smaller) packaging, that boasts fewer environmentally harmful chemicals, organic foods of all varieties and expensive television commercials paid for by Al Gore's foundation urging us all to do something about climate change. <http://www.wecansolveit.org>. Speaking of Al Gore, if the above examples are not enough to convince you that the eco-craze is in full swing, consider how amazing it is that Al Gore won an Oscar for his Inconvenient Truth movie a couple of years ago. He couldn't get elected President in 2000, but he won an Academy Award in 2006. Ronald Reagan was elected President twice, and he never won an Oscar (He was an actor in his younger life).

But I digress. The point of this article, as we celebrate Earth Day 2008, is to remind people that regardless of your profession, your political beliefs, or whether you believe in global warming, we can all do simple things in our own yards and neighborhoods to reduce water pollution, air pollution, litter and other environmental concerns.

Make a difference:

I'm reminded of the Earth Day slogan from the 1970s: “Think Globally, Act Locally.” That concept is as true today as it was then. In my neighborhood and city there are concerns about fertilizers, grass clippings, pet waste and other pollutants getting into the storm drains and into the local creeks. I am always interested in protecting and expanding local neighborhood parks as well as the larger city parks because of the air quality benefits from the trees. Our neighbors in communities in all directions from Salt Lake City and County are concerned about disappearing agricultural land and open space. This is also a concern to city dwellers like myself. These concerns live with people nearly every large city and small town in the country. The fact is, whether you are motivated by money, health, convenience or passing along a good environmental legacy, we can all take some

simple steps to use less energy, save water, and keep the water and air cleaner for future generations.

Simple steps:

Here are a few simple things anyone can do:

- Turn out the lights when you leave the room. Perhaps it would be best if you limit this activity to those times when you are the last person to leave the room.
- Install energy efficient light globes.
- Drive a little less. Consolidate trips to the grocery store, drive one less day a week to work, or walk to church or the neighborhood park.
- Sweep grassing clippings and other waste products off your driveway and sidewalks rather than using the hose and water. We don't have the water to waste and those clippings, fertilizer and other things can cause water pollution.

Here are some internet resources with additional ideas of simple things any of us can do to be good stewards of the Earth:

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/save-earth-top-ten.htm>

http://www.everydayactivist.com/ways_to_help/1/at_home

http://www.mde.state.md.us/CitizensInfoCenter/citizen_participation/things_to_do.asp

<http://lifelearningtoday.com/2007/08/28/things-you-can-do-today-to-help-save-the-environment/>

Finally, here are two interesting sites. TheEnvirolink Network's history of Earth Day, and the US Environmental Protection Agency's Earth Day web pages.

<http://earthday.envirolink.org/>

<http://epa.gov/earthday/>

Happy Earth Day 2008!

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“Cheatgrass”

Continued from page 1

highway traffic fatalities, and record pollution in Utah.

Provisions of SB 89 offer the UDAF and the UPCD the financial resources to undertake projects to reduce cheatgrass encroachment and begin the restoration of Utah's watersheds and rangelands.

“For years we have been spending millions of dollars fighting range fires that pollute our environment, threaten public safety, and negatively impact wildlife and livestock interests,” said Agriculture and Food Commissioner, Leonard Blackham. “This will help us improve range conditions that could limit the size and frequency of wildfires, thus saving millions of dollars to repair environmental damage,” he added.

The UDAF and its partners will distribute up to \$2 million from the Invasive Species Mitigation Fund for projects undertaken by agencies such as the BLM, the Department of Natural Resources, the Utah Conservation Commission and 15 other state and federal agencies. Such projects will focus on mitigating risks to public safety and health, air pollution, flooding, soil erosion, the release of carbon, damage to local economies, and habitat for wildlife or livestock.

For more info on the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, visit: www.ag.utah.gov

Utah Partners for Conservation and Development Promote Identity



The UtahPCD have been around since the early 1990s, but the organization, work and membership have really improved and increased in the past few years.

The above logo was recently developed and approved for use, along with a black & white version and a text only version. Along with the logo, a new web portal site is being developed and should be ready for

public viewing later this spring.

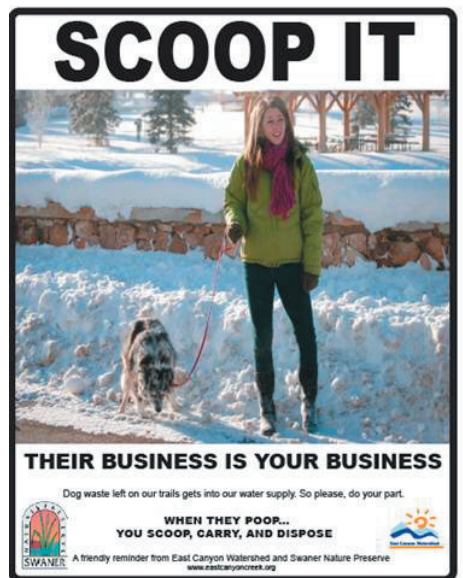
Some of the major initiatives and projects being taken on by the UtahPCD and its partner agencies include the Watershed Restoration Initiative, the Grazing Improvement Program, the War on Cheatgrass, several endangered species mitigation programs, and the Colorado River Salinity program, to name a few.

East Canyon Social Marketing Campaign Going to the Dogs

The East Canyon watershed committee unveiled the first phase of their new outreach and social marketing campaign in February. Print and radio advertisements asking people to pick up after their animals ran for about a month in late winter. A similar set of ads, but with summer backgrounds will begin running in late spring.

The pet waste ads will be followed by advertisements reminding people keeping household and yard chemicals out of the storm drains.

Additional outreach efforts will be directed toward agricultural landowners and people who own



small acreage horse property.

Along with mass media advertising, similar messages will appear on signs, displays and other venues.

Great Salt Lake Studies Move Forward

By **Walter L. Baker**

Director, Utah Division of Water Quality

The work of the Great Salt Lake Steering Committee will end in May 2008. The committee was organized to recommend a selenium standard on Great Salt Lake that will protect the ecosystem. This was a 4-year, \$2.27 scientific endeavor.

The Great Salt Lake (GSL) is one of Utah's Natural crown jewels – though perhaps the least understood and most neglected one. It is the most important inland shorebird site in North America; it supports 75 percent of the state's wetlands; it is one of the most significant wildlife habitats in our hemisphere; and it is the re-fueling stop for millions of migratory birds.

It is because of the GSL's importance and unique nature that the Utah Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is striving to understand this mysterious water body better, at least from a water quality perspective. The four-year selenium study will produce the first numeric pollutant standard devised for GSL, although I believe more will follow. During the same period, DWQ has led a nationally-recognized study investigating whether GSL wetlands are being impaired by excessive nutrients coming from natural sources and human activities. Soon, we will begin a study investigating the methyl-mercury issue in GSL. That study will allow us to define the magnitude of the mercury problem and help lead to the sources of the mercury pollution. Over \$3 million has been committed for these three studies, all aimed at increasing our understanding of conditions that

affect the GSL's water quality and helping us preserve the beneficial uses of the lake.

Each of these water quality investigations involve separate individuals and groups, but that approach is about to change. Recently, DWQ selected Jodi Gardberg of the Total Maximum Daily Load section of Water Quality to coordinate activities for a newly-designated GSL Watershed. This new approach will coordinate public and private efforts toward solving pressing water quality problems in the drainage basin of GSL – a 21,000-square-mile area that includes five major rivers and parts of three states. It is a huge area, equivalent to 25 percent of Utah's total land mass.

The GSL Watershed Committee will provide a continuing water quality forum based on strong science. Its core principles will be stakeholder involvement and collaboration; data collection; resource assessment; clear problem prioritization; goal-setting; and effective implementation and evaluation. The new committee will carry on work begun by the Great Salt Lake Steering Committee, but in broader terms. It will not supplant the work of other formal and informal groups interested in GSL. Instead, the GSL Watershed Committee will coalesce financial and institutional resources to address GSL's challenges, with a focus on environmental



and conservation issues.

In the future the GSL Watershed Committee may become a GSL Commission established by statute. Of the major sovereign water bodies in the state, which are Great Salt Lake, Utah Lake, Bear Lake, Jordan River, and portions of Green River, Colorado River and Bear River – only GSL, Jordan River and Green River do not benefit from statutory commissions. Despite the lack of an overseeing commission, Jordan River is under the stewardship of Salt Lake County which recently updated the area-wide water quality management plan which serves to protect the river. This leaves GSL as one of only two “orphaned” sovereign water bodies.